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# The Fairies' Child

Gertrude Knevels

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THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY  
PHILADELPHIA

# The Fairies' Child

By  
GERTRUDE KNEVELS



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The Fairies' Child

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# The Fairies' Child

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

THE FAIRY QUEEN.  
HONEYDEW, *the Fairy Princess.*  
MOSSKIN, *the Queen's Page.*  
FERNCAP  
SILVERLEAF  
LILYBELL  
BUTTERCUP  
ROSEBERRY  
MOONSHINE } *Fairies.*  
TRUDIE, *the woodcutter's daughter.*  
THISTLEKIN, *the fairies' child.*  
SLUMP, *a caterpillar.*

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## STORY OF THE PLAY

Little Trudie, the Woodcutter's child, has strayed into the forest on the magic night when the Queen of the Fairies must grant whatever request a mortal asks of her. Hiding behind the bushes, she hears the Fairy Princess tell Thistlekin he was a mortal baby, stolen from the Woodcutter, and recognizes her long lost brother. She begs for his release and the Queen must consent to let him go, with a farewell dance and song.

## COSTUMES

**FAIRY QUEEN.** White gauzy dress, long train from shoulders of pale blue, ornamented with gilt tinsel. Gilt crown and sceptre. Wings of white tarlatan spangled with gold.

**HONEYDEW.** Dress much like Queen's without train and ornamented with silver. Smaller wings. Silver circlet in hair and small sceptre.

**MOSSKIN.** Page's suit of bright blue with tinsel ornaments. Wings. Blue stockings and shoes with pointed toes.

**THE FAIRIES.** Dresses much like those of fairy princess but less ornamented, of tarlatan or any other gauzy material. Hair worn floating with silver circlets. Wings ornamented with silver.

**TRUDIE.** Child's peasant costume, red skirt, white blouse, white winged cap, black velvet bodice, apron.

**THISTLEKIN.** Tight fitting suit of green. Green pointed cap. Green and gold wings of a distinctly different fashion from those of other fairies.

**SLUMP.** The child who takes this part should wear a long sleeveless garment of green shiny cambric, gathered at the neck and as closely about the ankles as possible. Large black spots should be sewn in two rows up and down back. The head should be completely covered with a green hood made like a bag, the corners twisted and wired to resemble horns. Holes may be cut for the eyes and mouth. Green stockings complete this costume.

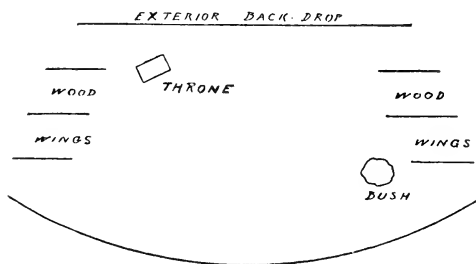
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## MUSIC AND DANCES FOR THE PLAY

The music of a talking machine hidden behind a screen at one side of the stage will be found sufficient for the play, in case a regular orchestra is not provided. The Fairies' Song may be sung to the music of "The Danish Dance of Greeting," a record easily obtainable. Suitable folk dances and music will be found in "Folk Dances and Singing Games," by E. Burchenal, price \$1.50, which may be obtained from the publishers of this play.

Almost any simple folk dance is suitable for the first dance of the fairies. The second dance should be danced in circle formation. Fairies should circle to the left during eight counts, then eight counts to the right, then forward to center eight counts, back the same. The first verse of song should then be sung standing still. Repeat dance and then sing second verse. Dance in circle once more, bow to Queen, and return to places.

## SCENE PLOT



FOR OUTDOOR PRODUCTION. Any meadow or grove of trees is a suitable site for the play; preferably an open space with a small wooded slope behind. Otherwise, a background may be made from a fence or a wire screen interlaced with branches. No other scenery is required except a log up R. for the Queen's throne, and a bush down L. for Trudie's hiding-place.

FOR INDOOR PRODUCTION. The above cut shows stage setting if given indoors. It may, however, be much simpler, and the play can be given on any platform or stage without scenery. In this case the floor should be covered with green cloth and large plants placed about at intervals to suggest a forest. An exterior drop for the rear is best, although a plain green curtain will suffice.





# The Fairies' Child

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SCENE.—*A glade in the fairies' forest. Time, late afternoon.*

(*Enter TRUDIE, R., walking slowly, and looking from side to side as if searching for something. She seems half delighted, half afraid.*)

TRUDIE. Here I am at last all alone in the Fairies' Wood! How often I've wanted to come, but Mother never would let me. She was afraid the fairies might steal me as they stole my baby brother so long ago! The Queen herself came for him on Midsummer's Eve, and now every year on that day my mother sits and cries. To-day I couldn't bear to see her, so I ran away. Oh, if I could only find the spot where the fairies dance! I'm tired already, but I won't give up till I find a fairy, not if I have to search under every bush and every leaf in the forest.

(*As she talks she crosses stage and goes out L.*)

(*Enter, R., six fairies, FERNCAP, SILVERLEAF, etc. They dance. For this dance see description of dances. PRINCESS HONEYDEW enters, R., and stands a moment up C.*)

PRINCESS (*raising wand*). Stop!

(*Fairies on hearing her voice turn toward her, separating into two groups. She steps down C.*)

SILVERLEAF. Oh, here's Princess Honeydew!

FAIRIES. Welcome, Princess, come and dance with us!

PRINCESS. Dear fairies, have you forgotten the latest rule? No dancing except by moonlight!

FERNCAP. Oh, dear, there are so many rules!

PRINCESS. Be careful! Her Majesty is coming this way, and she's in the most dreadful temper!

FERNCAP. What's the matter now?

SILVERLEAF. Has Thistlekin been naughty again?

PRINCESS. Yes, dreadfully naughty, but the real trouble is that to-night is Midsummer's Eve, when her Majesty's nerves are always in a flutter for fear she will meet a Mortal.

BUTTERCUP. Well, what if she does? Mortals can't see fairies.

PRINCESS. Buttercup, I'm ashamed of you! Even if you are only five hundred years old and a mere baby, you ought to know better than that. On Midsummer's Eve all Mortals can see fairies. That's why we were ordered to hide in the forest to-day. Shall I tell you a secret? (*Fairies gather more closely about her.*) If a Mortal is lucky enough to meet the Fairy Queen to-night, he may ask any one wish he pleases of her and the Queen cannot refuse!

BUTTERCUP. Oh-ho, so that's why the Queen is so anxious! She can't bear giving anything away—least of all wishes!

PRINCESS. Hush, here she comes!

(*Music. As FAIRY QUEEN enters, L., with very slow, majestic step, her train held by MOSSKIN, all the fairies bow low before her.*)

FAIRIES. Hail to your Majesty! Hail to the glorious Queen of Fairyland!

QUEEN (*standing down c., MOSSKIN behind her, PRINCESS, L.*). Fairies, you were dancing just now. Don't attempt to deny it! Dancing—and by the light of day. I've a good mind to give one twirl of my magic wand and turn you all into field-mice! Are my commands never to be respected? Haven't I told you again and again that no self-respecting fairy dances except by moonlight?

PRINCESS. Certainly, your Majesty, but—dear me—fairies will be fairies! (*To others.*) Come, let us show her Majesty that we know how fairies ought to behave.

(*Music. Fairies dance and sing.*)

When the Moon comes, shining brightly,  
 Little fairies dance and sing,  
 Stepping softly, treading lightly,  
 Round and round the Fairy Ring.

When the Sun comes, then it's daytime,  
 Little fairies hide away,  
 For the dark night is their playtime,  
 Fairies' bedtime is the day!

*(At end of dance all bow and return to places.)*

QUEEN. Very good, see that you don't forget again. And now, where is Thistlekin? Bring him before me.

MOSSKIN *(bowing)*. Please, your Majesty, I've already sent for Thistlekin, but he refuses to come.

QUEEN. Refuses to come?

MOSSKIN. Yes, your Majesty, he says he's just finishing off a very difficult piece of mending and cannot be disturbed.

QUEEN. What is he mending?

MOSSKIN. Slump, the Caterpillar, please your Majesty.

QUEEN. Slump, the Caterpillar! Why, only yesterday I ordered that disobedient creature to be cut into seven slices for refusing to draw my royal oak-leaf chariot!

MOSSKIN. It was done, your Majesty. I attended to the execution myself, but you know what a strange fellow Thistlekin is—always thinking he must be doing a kindness to somebody! No sooner had he heard that Slump was in trouble than he flew to the wretched caterpillar's aid, and now Slump is neatly mended and as good—or as bad—as ever again.

QUEEN. Bring them both before me. *(Enter, L., THISTLEKIN, SLUMP crawling behind him.)* Thistlekin, come hither! *(THISTLEKIN kneels before her.)* Slump, you disobedient Caterpillar, crawl to my feet! *(SLUMP turns back deliberately on QUEEN and begins to eat leaves.)* I will be obeyed! *(Stamps foot.)* Slump, continue to eat leaves! *(Turns to PRINCESS.)* You see, my dear, a little firmness is all that is necessary to manage him! *(To THISTLEKIN.)* And now, my naughty Thistlekin, what is this I hear of you? In spite of my express commands that you should never approach the home of any living Mortal, last night you were seen on the edge of the fairy forest, lurking about the Woodcutter's door!

THISTLEKIN. It is true, your Majesty; nor is it the first time I've visited the Woodcutter's cottage. Many and many a night I've left the rest here dancing in the fairy ring, and slipped away through the woods to peer in at his window!

QUEEN. What did you see?

THISTLEKIN (*dreamily*). I saw red fire glowing on a hearth, and when I saw it I knew that I was cold. I saw mortal food spread out on a white cloth, and when I saw it I knew that I was hungry. I saw a little mortal child, the Woodcutter's daughter, climb into her mother's lap. . . . Then for the first time in all my life I knew that I was lonely and sad!

QUEEN. You lonely, Thistlekin—you who can dance all night long with the gayest elves and fairies of the wood! You cold—when you can sleep all day in the sun, wrapped up in a mullein leaf blanket! You hungry? Why, you can feast whenever you please on fairy fruit and wine at my royal table——

THISTLEKIN. Yes, hungry and cold and lonely, in spite of all those things. While I was looking in at the Woodcutter's window, I wished——

QUEEN (*anxiously*). What did you wish?

THISTLEKIN. That I had never been born a fairy, but just a mortal boy!

FAIRIES (*showing surprise*). Oh, oh, how naughty! How shocking!

QUEEN. Thistlekin, I will listen to you no longer. My royal patience is exhausted. Remember, you are a prisoner in this spot until to-morrow dawns, and if ever again you stray beyond the borders of the fairy wood, you shall be shut up in the hollow oak tree for one hundred years! (*To fairies.*) Come, fairies, let us go.

(*Music.* QUEEN walks slowly out, L., followed by MOSSKIN and fairies. THISTLEKIN throws himself on ground down C., and begins to cry. SLUMP crawls to him and rubs head against him.)

THISTLEKIN. Go away, Slumpy, go away, I'm too miserable!

(*Exit SLUMP, L.*)

(*Enter TRUDIE, R. She starts back at sight of THISTLEKIN.*)

TRUDIE (*speaking very softly*). A fairy—oh, a fairy at last! I ought to speak to him but I—oh, I'm afraid! Here comes another! (*Enter PRINCESS.*) I'll hide behind this bush. (*Hides.*)

PRINCESS. Thistlekin! (*She kneels down and puts arm about him.*) Why, water is coming out of his eyes! I suppose that's what mortals call crying. Thistlekin, dear Thistlekin, I can't bear to see you so miserable. I don't care what the Queen does to me, I'm going to tell you —

THISTLEKIN. Tell me what?

PRINCESS. The truth. Thistlekin, you are not really a fairy at all! You were born a mortal baby and the Woodcutter's son, but you were so beautiful that the Fairy Queen was jealous of your mother and stole you away. Since then you have been called the fairies' child. Have you never wondered why your wings were so unlike ours? The Queen made a little magic pair for you, and all your fairy powers are contained in them. If you could get rid of your wings —

THISTLEKIN (*jumping up and shaking himself excitedly*). If I could only get rid of my wings I would be a mortal boy again!

TRUDIE (*coming out from behind bush*). Yes, and my brother!

THISTLEKIN. The Woodcutter's daughter! My little sister!

(*They hug each other.*)

PRINCESS. It's no use. Only the Queen can free you from your wings, and she would never do it!

TRUDIE. I'll ask her; I'm not afraid!

THISTLEKIN. She's coming now! (*Music.*)

(*Enter QUEEN, MOSSKIN and fairies, L. Fairies stand back bowing in semicircle. QUEEN walks front.*)

FAIRIES (*pointing at TRUDIE*). A Mortal, oh, oh, a Mortal in the Fairies' Forest!

QUEEN (*sternly*). Child, how did you come here?

TRUDIE (*kneeling and stretching out arms*). I want my brother! Please give me back my brother, dear kind Fairy Queen!

QUEEN (*angrily*). Wretched child, I suppose I must grant your wish if you persist in it, but this I promise you. If I let Thistlekin go, I will keep you here in his place, not as the fairies' child, but as their prisoner.

TRUDIE. I will stay.

QUEEN. Fairies, what pretty things shall we do to her?

MOSSKIN. Prick her with our sharpest thorns!

FERNCAP. Loose the bees on her!

BUTTERCUP. Change her into a toad or a slimy snake!

SILVERLEAF. Turn her loose in the forest to be eaten by the bears!

*(Fairies crowd round TRUDIE as if to lead her away. THISTLEKIN pushes them aside and puts his arm around her.)*

THISTLEKIN. You shall not touch her! You shan't hurt my little sister! *(To TRUDIE.)* No, Trudie, keep your wish for yourself and you'll soon be safe at home.

TRUDIE. I can't bear to leave you.

THISTLEKIN. But you must—else what would Mother say? She could not do without you.

TRUDIE. But she wants you, too! She cries for you.

THISTLEKIN. Tell her I'll come to her. Tell her I'll be near her, even if she can never see me. Tell her to watch for me by night in the moonlight and in the wind, and by day in the little sunbeams that dance about the cottage door!

QUEEN *(drawing THISTLEKIN away from TRUDIE)*. Stay with me, little Thistlekin, stay with me and be happy! You shall have a silken suit all made of rose leaves, sewn with a spider's shining thread. You shall have a little silver trumpet and a pot of fairy gold —

THISTLEKIN. I only want my mother —

QUEEN. Foolish child, I am your mother! I will dance all night with you on the dewy grass, I will fly with you in the moon's path higher than the tallest trees, I will feast with you on honey and on fairy bread —

THISTLEKIN. My mother would love me.

QUEEN. I love you!

THISTLEKIN. Not enough. Not enough to let me go.

QUEEN. I love you, little Thistlekin, I love you—yes—even enough for that!

*(She pushes him from her.)*

TRUDIE. You'll let him come with me?

THISTLEKIN. Does your Majesty really mean —

QUEEN. Yes. See, I will take off his magic wings!

*(Removes wings.)*

THISTLEKIN (*dancing for joy*). And now I am a boy !  
Ho, ho, a boy at last ! Come, little Sister, let's go home.

QUEEN. Fairies, wish them luck before they go !

FAIRIES (*all taking hands and dancing round children*).  
Good luck, good luck to Thistlekin and Trudie. Good luck  
to 'Thistlekin, the Fairies' Child !

CURTAIN





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